

A Shakarian Moment

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Category: Mass Effect

Genre: Romance

Language: English

Characters: Garrus V., Shepard (F)

Pairings: Shepard (F)/Garrus V.

Status: Completed

Published: 2016-04-13 18:56:16

Updated: 2016-04-13 18:56:16

Packaged: 2016-04-27 18:38:46

Rating: K+

Chapters: 1

Words: 1,696

Publisher: www.fanfiction.net

Summary: ME2. Garrus is jittery. Shepard wants to know why. Rewrite of the romance opener. Complete.

A Shakarian Moment

Garrus was unusually quiet and fidgety when she came down to the main battery to visit, after they returned from Miranda's "little" excursion to run interference for her sister's escape.

After a few minutes of failed mission talk, failed small talk, she fixed the gunnery officer with a curious but quelling look. "What's the matter, Garrus?"

"Hmm?"

Stars, she loved those subharmonics. Not that she was going to tell him, that, though. Making a move on a subordinate, even "especially" one she trusted as much as Garrus, could be fatal. To the success of the mission, no less.

"You seem out of sorts."

After a pause to let the translator figure that idiom out, he turned towards her, leaning casually on the safety rail "but she could see the tension humming through his body. She still didn't know turians that well, but his posture, his breathing, and the way he didn't know what to do with his hands all told of nerves.

What could he have to say that would make him that nervous? Was he quitting? He had told her he was okay with letting Sidonis live. Had he changed his mind?

Still, the thing with his hands was endearingly familiar "humans did it too.

All this passed through her mind in the blink of an eye, and then he began, hesitatingly, to speak.

"Shepardâ€¦ You know that there's no one in this galaxy I respect more than you. I might not show it, but I'd rather follow you, be at your side, than do anything else â€" even if it ends up getting us both killed."

So he wasn't quitting then. And was it just her imagination, or was there a slightly different subharmonic in the words 'be at your side'?

No. Quit it, marine, she told herself sternly. Keep this professional. Just because you have a crush on the exotic, badass, snarky sniper who is also a good friend doesn't give you leave to reinterpret his words.

"I'm sensing a 'but' here, Vakarian," she said before he could trip over something else.

He sighed, heavy, and flanging, and came to lean against the desk she was leaning on, beside her. He was slightly in her personal space, but that was normal for Garrus. He never got in anyone else's personal space; she supposed it was his way of showing how much he trusted her compared to anyone else on this Cerberus-funded vessel.

"There was this one mission, me and this recon scout had been at each other's throats, nerves mostly. She suggested we settle it in the ring."

Shepard straightened up and paid attention, though with confusion. He'd told her a bit about his life with C-Sec, but very little about his younger life in the military.

"Well, she and I were the two best hand to hand combatants on the ship. I had reach, she had flexibility. It was brutal. After 9 rounds, the judges declared it a draw. A lot of unhappy bettors in the other room. We, uh, ended up having a tiebreaker in her quarters. I had reach, she had flexibility. More than one way to work off stress, I guessâ€¦"

Shepard stared at him. "You're stressed? Well, I mean, we all are- Wait. What exactly are you implying, Officer Vakarian?"

At the same moment, he smacked his palm into his plated forehead, then ran it slowly along his fringe, a sure sign that he was embarrassed to hell and back. "I- Umâ€¦ Look, Shepardâ€¦"

She was being cruel on him. She reached out with her small, five-fingered hand and rested it on his armoured shoulder. "Garrus."

A flanging grunt was her first answer and he wouldn't look in her direction. "Shepard. I, um, I'm not going to pretend I have a fetish for humans â€" Look, it's just stupid. I shouldn't have said anything. Certainly not like that."

"I'm still here," she said gently. "Do you want to try again?"

He was silent for a long time, but he wasn't fleeing her, or kicking her out, and that was a good sign. She waited, hand still on his shoulder.

"Shepard," and she did shiver at those deep subharmonics. "I respect you more than anyone else in the galaxy." Now he turned to look at her, and she was instantly mesmerised by those piercing bright blue eyes, so alien, and yetâ€¦ him. It seemed his earlier embarrassment had not dimmed his intensity. But what did? For all the sardonic drawl under fire, he was the most intense person she knew. And she liked that in him.

"Andâ€¦?" she prompted him, as he just stared at her.

"I wantâ€¦ to be with you," he finished, somewhat lamely. "It'sâ€¦ been like that for a while, if you're wondering. Not a spur-of-the-moment thing. If you've noticed me being jittery before around you."

"Garrus Vakarian," she said, though her own heart was in her throat, "are you trying to tell me that you love me?"

Immediately, his whole posture relaxed, just a little, and he gave a short laugh. "That obvious, huh?"

"It wasn't exactly subtle after the wholeâ€¦ 'tie-breaker' thing," she said, elbowing him with a grin.

He ran his hand along his fringe again. "I'm never going to live that down, am I."

"Oh, you might, you might," she teased gently. "Though only if you show me exactly what you can do with your 'reach', sometime."

He jolted as if electrocuted. "Shepardâ€¦"

"Garrus. You are allowed to call me by my first name."

"â€¦Elanaâ€¦?"

"Yes, Garrus?"

"You're notâ€¦ upset?"

She rubbed his shoulder, instantly contrite again. It was just too easy to tease him. "No, of course not."

"You always try to spend equal amounts of time with the crew, I never thoughtâ€¦"

"It'sâ€¦ Garrus. Listen." Oh good, now it was her turn to try to put her thoughts in order. "I didn't want to say anything as your commanding officer. But Iâ€¦ I've always liked you."

"The sort of like that leads toâ€¦?" he asked hopefully.

"Exactly," she said. "You might tell me you're a bad turian, but I think you're perfect for me."

"But I question your orders. I might follow them, but Iâ€¦| hells, I don't ever want to think about the fact that it was your head between me and Sidonis. Never again."

"I wasn't too fond of being there either," she said, but she grinned to comfort him. "You're probably my best friend in this screwed up galaxy, and I am open â€" very open â€" to finding out if we can be something more."

He stared at her, and her voice locked up, suddenly.

"Shepardâ€¦|"

That voice that kindled pools of warmth in her stomachâ€¦|

Suddenly she found her voice again. "And I'm not going to pretend I have a fetish for turians, but I've always found them attractive somehow. I think it's the fringe. Though if a human went and got a fringe I'd probably say he looked stupid." Aaaaand she was babbling. "And it's your voice. And the eyes."

She was blindsiding him with one thing after another.

"Elana," he interrupted, and she stopped, thankful for his intervention. "I'm always here for you. And I do want to find out if we can be something more." His arm crept out and around her, drawing her to his side. She turned slightly to be in front of him, and pressed her hands to his still-damaged chestplate. "I'm your back-up, like I always have been â€" just a little bit closer."

"I think it's more than that," she said quietly, staring up into those blue eyes. "There are some days when it's all I can do to keep it together. The mission, the teamâ€¦| stars, even me."

"You?"

"Yeahâ€¦| Some days I just want to hide in my insanely luxurious bed and let some other poor sod deal with saving the galaxyâ€¦| It's only your sarcastic quips that keep me going, sometimes."

He blinked. "Really. I had no idea I was so useful."

She frowned up at him uncertainly. "Thatâ€¦| wasn't sarcasm, was it?"

He coughed awkwardly, a sort of half-laugh. "No. I'm glad to be of help, Shep- Elana. I knew you had it rough, rougher than the rest of us. But I didn't think it was so bad you needed me to keep going."

"I do," she said, very quietly. "I need you around, Garrus."

His arms tightened protectively around her. Men were the same in any species â€" in a good way. "I'm here, Elana."

"Thanks."

He was so close to her, and she reached out and touched the healing side of his face " so gently. He crooned a little and leaned in to it, then bent his head until their foreheads touched.

Now she wanted to know if turians kissed, or if she could teach it to him without offending him horribly

He said he respected her. If he didn't like it, he would let her know, and that would be the end of it.

"Garrus," she said, getting his attention again. That intense, bright blue attention. She could feel his breath on her face, and she knew he could feel her heartbeat surging all too fast through her soft-skinned human body.

She didn't get to be Commander Elana F-ing Shepard by being a coward.

Without giving herself too much time to think about it, she leaned up and pressed her mouth against his, then leaned back, watching his reaction cautiously.

"Oh. Ohhh." He seemed startled, but it seemed to be in a good way. "This is that 'kissing' thing that humans do, isn't it?"

She grinned. "Yes. Is it okay?"

"Do it again."

She grinned even more broadly and leaned in to oblige.

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"Wait," he said. "Joker also makes you smile."

"Yes, but you don't see me in his arms, do you?"

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